

# farm and home

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
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## FACT SHEET

ANIMAL  
HUSBANDRY

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4

# Judging Hogs

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The successful swine producer has to be a keen judge of hogs. Every time he buys or sells hogs, his judgment is an important factor in determining his profit or loss.

Judging hogs requires special skill and reasoning. It is an appraisal of an animal or animals in comparison with the ideal of a particular type or class. Modern meat-type hogs are essential for a successful swine operation. So it is important to know -- not to guess -- the types of hogs that will respond best to feed and the types that will bring the top market prices.

The farmer who sells breeding stock has more chance to succeed if he knows what types of animals are in greatest demand. Having the correct type of hogs is a source not only of pride but of profit.

### MEAT-TYPE HOG IS NOW IN DEMAND

Hogs are no longer judged for "lard" or "bacon" type; all are judged for the red meat they will yield. The goal is to have a large percentage of meat and a minimum amount of fat. Since muscle is red meat hogs should be muscular and well-de-

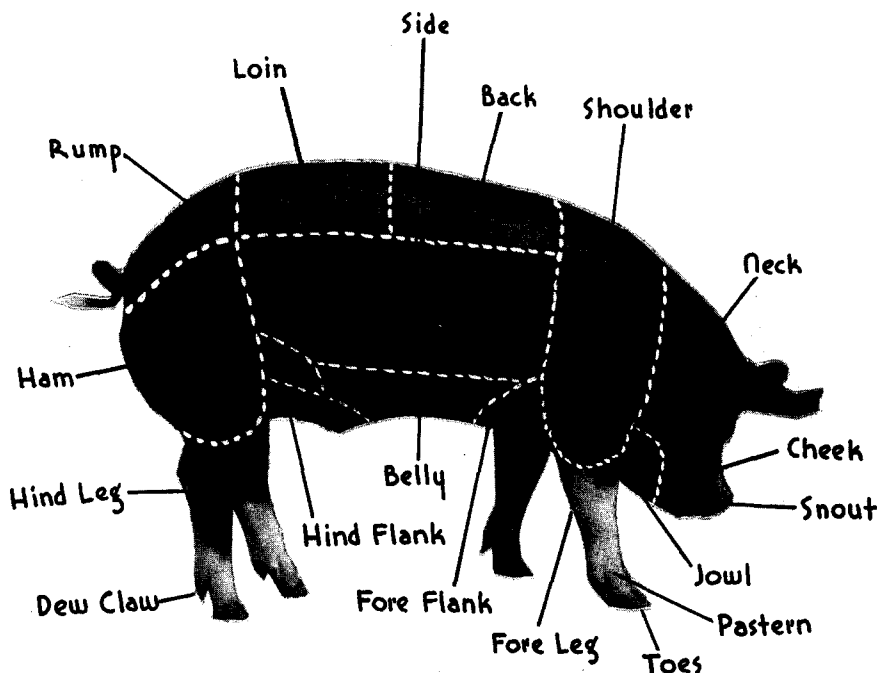
veloped in regions of the most valuable cuts. The fleshing should not be loose and flabby but solid and firm to the touch.

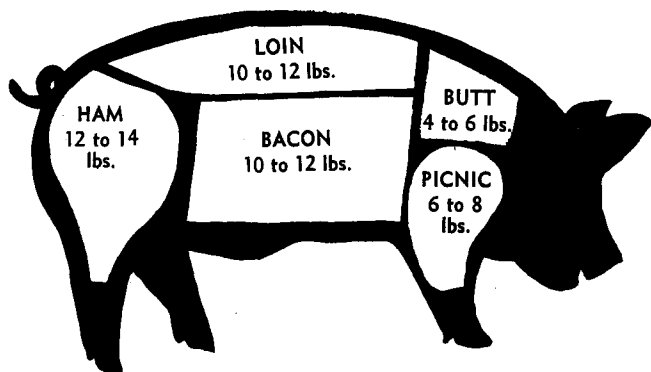
Numerous experiments at the University of Minnesota and results at swine-testing stations show increased efficiency and rate-of-gain for the "meat-type" hog. It takes less feed to produce a pound of a meat than to produce a pound of lard. Lard is a drug on the market; consumers are demanding lean meat.

### WHAT A HOG JUDGE SHOULD KNOW

A good judge of hogs has to know:

1. The different parts of a hog and the relative value of each part.
2. The characteristics which determine the usefulness of the animal for its special purpose -- that is, for breeding or for marketing.
3. How to appraise and balance the information available in reaching a decision which measures the animal against an accepted standard.





HOG CARCASS CUTS -- Approximate value and average cut-out percentages.

Average Percent of Carcass	Approximate Percent of Value
Ham . . . . 18%	Ham . . . . . 30%
Bacon . . 15.5%	Bacon . . . . . 17%
Loin . . . 13.5%	Loin . . . . . 22%
Picnic . . . 9%	Picnic . . . . . 8%
Butt . . . . 7%	Butt . . . . . 8%

### JUDGING BREEDING HOGS

The major shows recognize nine breeds of hogs. There are different characteristics that distinguish one breed from another -- such as color, markings, shape, and size. All swine-breeding associations are stressing economy of gain and meatiness. The over-fat hog is no longer in favor.

**SOWS** -- Sows should show femininity and broodiness. They should be deep-bodied; long in the sides; carry wide, plump hams, and have a uniform, arched back. Their shoulders should not be too wide, and their fore-ribs should be well-sprung. Wrinkles on the sides, loins, lower hams, and face are objectionable. Uniformity and firmness of fleshing is the most desirable characteristic. Quality is indicated by smoothness and refinement.

On all breeds, at least 12 well-developed and well-spaced teats are preferred. Inverted or blind teats are considered disqualifications.

**BOARS** -- Boars should show masculinity, ruggedness, good size for their age, and 12 or more rudimentary teats.

Breeding stock should be sound, free from lameness, crooked legs or weak pasterns.

### JUDGING MARKET HOGS

Market hogs are judged for the red meat they will yield. Too much condition is highly objectionable. The tendency should be to muscle instead of fat. When measured with a backfat probe, 200- to 230-pound market hogs should have no more than 1.6 inches of back fat.

Market hogs should be best developed in regions of the most valuable cuts. A yield of 50 percent or more of carcass in ham, loin, picnic, and Boston butt is considered good.

Market hogs should have even lines and a symmetrical build. The head should be trim, with a neat jowl and a short neck. The shoulders should be smooth on top and blended neatly into the body. The back should be of uniform width, and the loin wide and muscular. The belly should be deep into the flanks but not pendulous or wasty. The rump should be long, carrying an even width to a high tail setting. The hams should be wide, long, deep, smooth, and not tapering. The legs should be straight, wide apart, and not too heavy-boned.

### HOG JUDGING TERMS

**Commendable terms** are: More scale for age; longer, deeper, wider, more uniform in width. Fuller in the heart and deeper in the fore-rib. Deeper in the loin; back more strongly arched; longer in the sides; straighter in the underline; deeper, fuller in the hams; firmer in fleshing. More nearly correct in finish. Straighter legged and sounder footed. More spring of rib; more width in the loin and across the rump. More masculine, or more feminine, and neater in the head, trimmer in the jowl. Meatier and a higher dressing percentage.

**Negative terms** are: Off-type; carries too much condition; rough, shallow-bodied; too short; sloping rump; too leggy, too low-set; too thick; tapering; blind or inverted nipples; open shoulders, heavy in shoulders; pinched in heart girth; fish-backed; wasty in the middle; light in the hams; cut up in the flanks; coarse jowl; weak pasterns; light-boned; overdone or underfinished.

### SAMPLE SET OF JUDGING REASONS

**MARKET HOGS** -- "I placed this class of middle-weight barrows 4, 3, 1, 2. I placed 4 over 3 because he is more correctly finished, has more muscling, more length, and is more uniform in his width. He is deeper in his hams. I placed 3 over 1 because he carries more length and is more desirable in his finish than 1. He carries less fat and is trimmer throughout his middle, firmer in his fleshing. He will yield more red meat. He also follows the type of hog which I placed first. No. 1 has more width of rump and ham than 3, but much of this will be waste when he is slaughtered. I placed 2 at the bottom because he is overdone. He carries too much finish and is rather loose, soft, and wasty in his underline."

**BREEDING HOGS** -- "I placed this class of spring gilts 1, 2, 3, 4. I placed 1 over 2 for quality, balance, and symmetry. She has more length, a more fully developed underline, and is more refined and feminine about her neck and head. I placed 2 over 3 because she is larger, deeper in her body with greater spring of rib, and she has a longer, wider rump and a deeper, plumper ham. I placed 3 over 4 because of general appearance. She has a stronger arched back, more muscling, less jowl, and is smoother in the shoulders. I placed 4 at the bottom because she is too short and carries too much finish for a modern meat-type hog."

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